

Regional Parks System Annual Use Estimate

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July 16, 2018



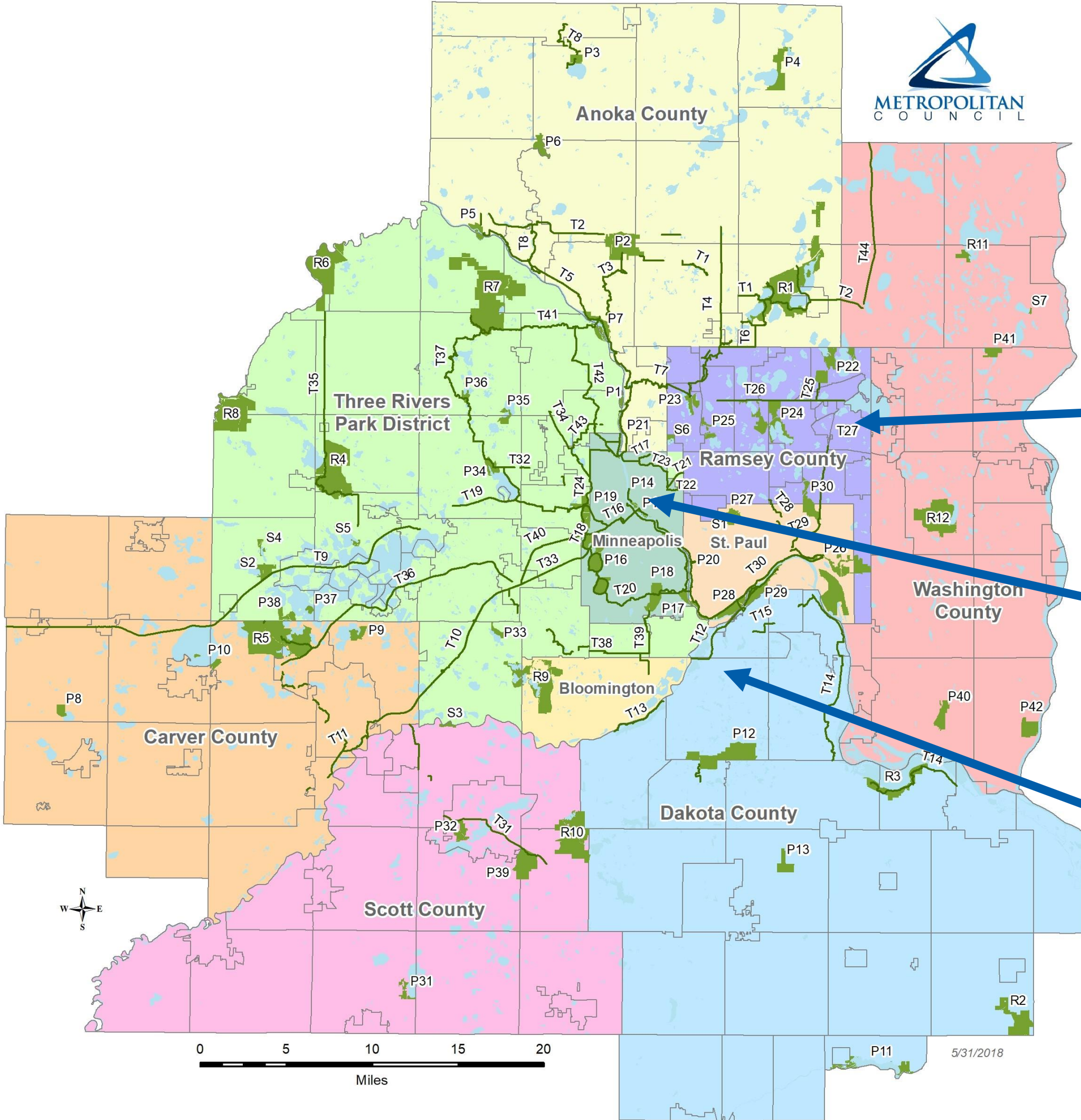
Use Estimate Background

- Produced annually since 1995
- Used in formulas to calculate regional park implementing agency's share of Regional Parks System grant program dollars
- Allows for monitoring trends over time

Calculating the Annual Use Estimate

- Begins with counts performed by regional park implementing agencies
 - Count people entering all regional parks and trails
 - Pedestrians, bicyclists, vehicles, buses, boats
 - Memorial Day to Labor Day
 - Random days/times
 - Weekend/Weekday
 - 2-hour time blocks
- Summer counts combined with previous three years of count data
- Additional calculations:
 - People-per-vehicle, Days/Times, Possible entrances
- Lastly, special event and camping data are added

2017 Annual Use Estimate



- The estimate includes data from 106 regional parks and trails
 - New to the estimate in 2017:
 - Lakes Link Regional Trail
 - Ramsey County
 - Above the Falls Regional Park
 - Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board
 - Minnesota River Greenway Regional Trail
 - Dakota County

T36 Regional Trails
 P46 Regional Park, Park Reserve, or Special Recreation Feature



Important Changes to 2017 Estimation

- Includes additional calculations with several inputs:
 - Inputs include:
 - Average persons-per-vehicle
 - Seasonal visitation (fall, winter, spring)
 - Calculated from data gathered directly from regional park and trail visitors
- Inputs updated in 2017 and applied to 2017 use estimate
 - New survey of regional park and trail visitors occurred in 2016
 - Changed inputs: biggest change was **higher reported fall, winter and spring** visitation compared to data collected in 2008

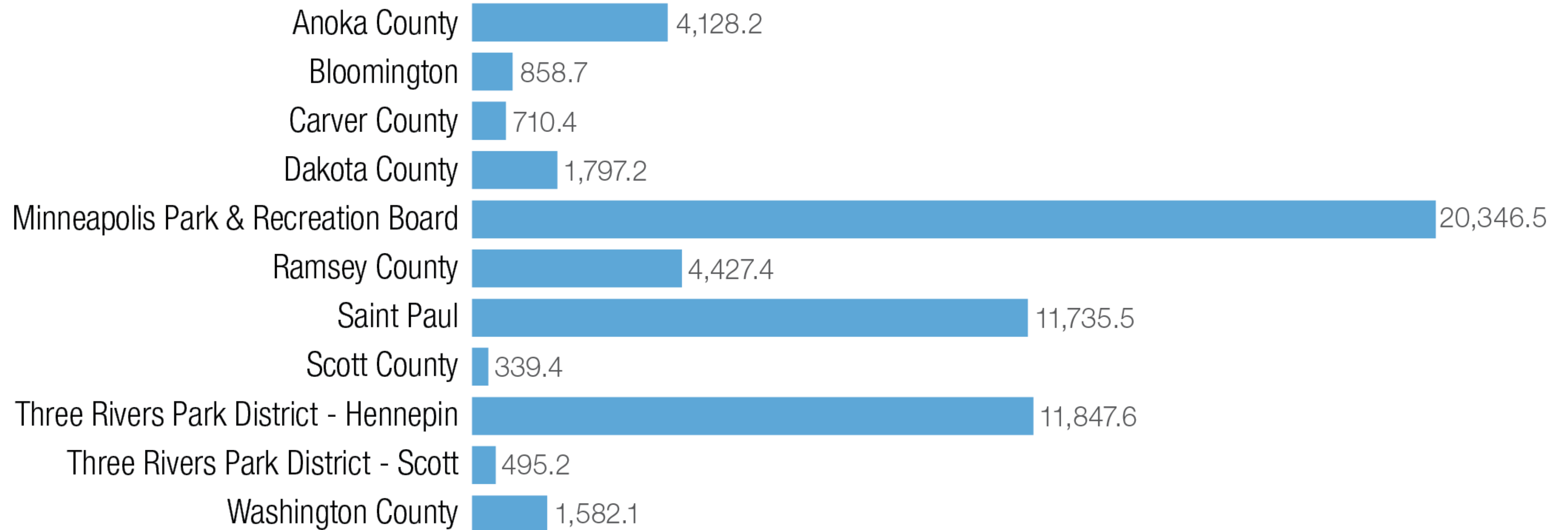
2017 Total Estimated Visits

58.3 Million Visits



Agency Share of Regional Parks System Visits

2017 VISITS BY PARK AGENCY (IN THOUSANDS)



58,268.1 total visits

Source: Metropolitan Council's Park Use Estimate, 2017.

Also available: The [2017 Park Use Estimate methodology report \[PDF\]](#) and [Appendix Tables \[PDF\]](#).



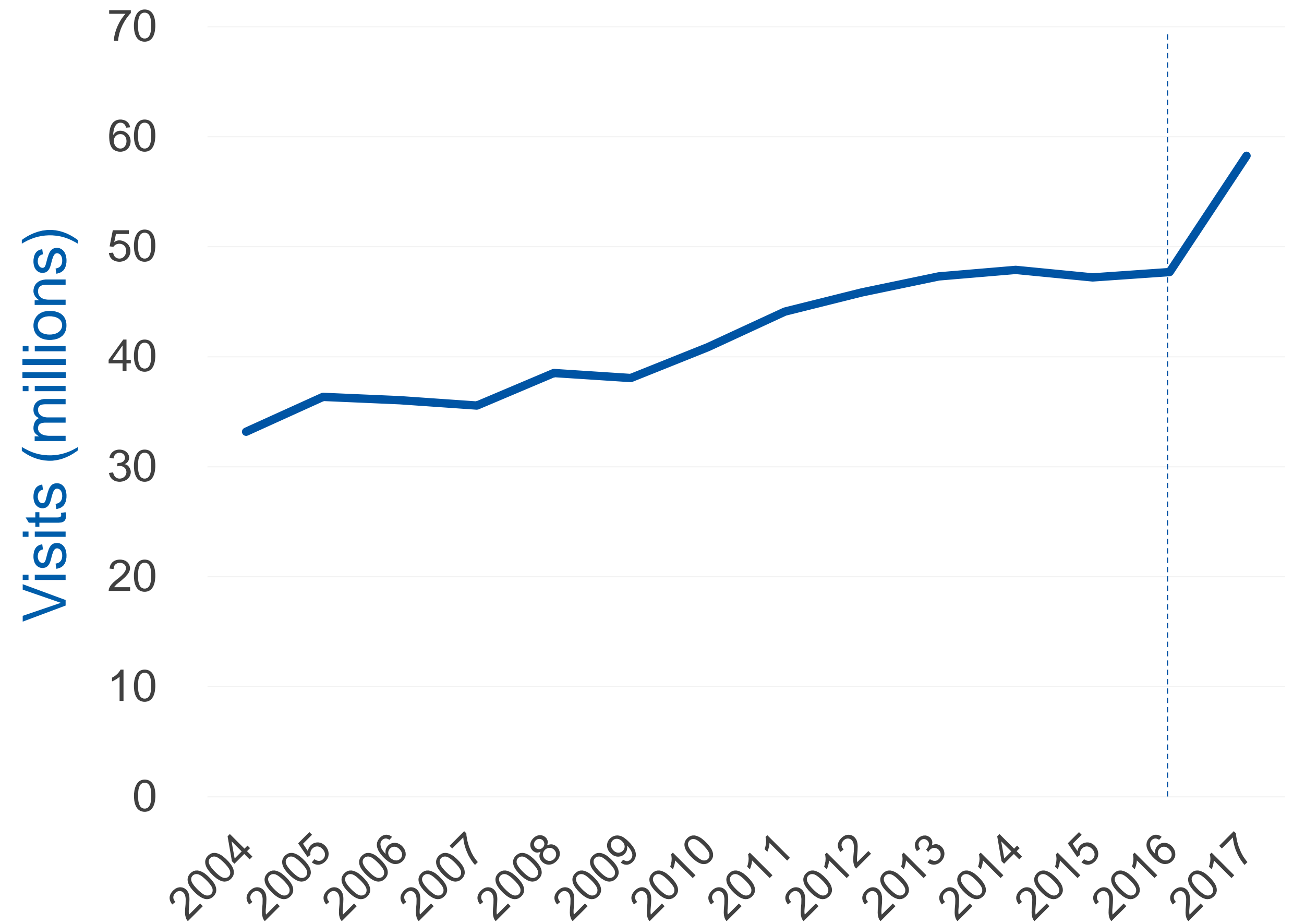
Most Visited Parks

	Agency	2017 Visits (in millions)
Minneapolis Chain-of-Lakes Regional Park	Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board	7.1
Como Regional Park, Zoo & Conservatory Special Recreation Feature	Saint Paul	5.4
Central Mississippi Riverfront Regional Park	Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board	2.8
Mississippi Gorge Regional Park	Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board/ Saint Paul	2.7
Minnehaha Regional Park	Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board	2.1



Growth in Visits

- Relatively steady growth over time
- Up 22% from 2016
- Why?
 - Updated seasonal visitation input
 - Reported visits in fall, winter and spring among regional park and trail visitors



Future of Parks Research

- Twin Cities Regional Parks system is nationally renowned
- Quality of life and livability, but also economic competitiveness
- Expanding and elevating parks research to match level of importance
 - New innovative data sources
 - New interactive apps and planning tools
 - Planning 2020 visitor study
 - New parks research program branding

PlayFeatures

- Lifts up our recreation research
- Accessible insights for all
- Modern look and feel that reflects our aspiration toward innovation
- More than just static reports
 - Interactive visualizations
 - Planning apps



2017 Regional Parks System Annual Use Estimate

The seven-county Twin Cities region is home to a system of regional parks and trails that are nationally renowned for their beauty, size, and variety of features. With 55 regional parks and preserves (totalling about 54,000 acres), approximately 400 miles of interconnected trails, and eight special recreation features, this regional system provides a wealth of opportunities for recreation, exercise, and just plain fun. It also preserves significant green space and wildlife habitat.

We have produced estimates of visits to the Regional Parks System annually since 1995. The park use estimates are based on visit data collected within each of the 106 regional park and trails, with additional calculations.¹

Key Findings	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• An estimated 58.3 million visits were made to the Regional Parks System in 2017—a 22% increase from 2016. Most of this growth is attributed to this year's update of the estimate's seasonal inputs for fall, winter, and spring visitation, which had not been updated since 2008.• One regional park (Above the Falls Regional Park) and two regional trails (Lake Links in Ramsey County and Minnesota River Bluffs in Dakota County) were added to the system in 2017.• With over seven million visits, Minneapolis Chain of Lakes was the most-visited park in the Regional Parks System in 2017, followed by Como Park, Zoo, and Conservatory (5.3 million visits).
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Baker Park Reserve
Three Rivers Park District



Bunker Hills Regional Park
Anoka County



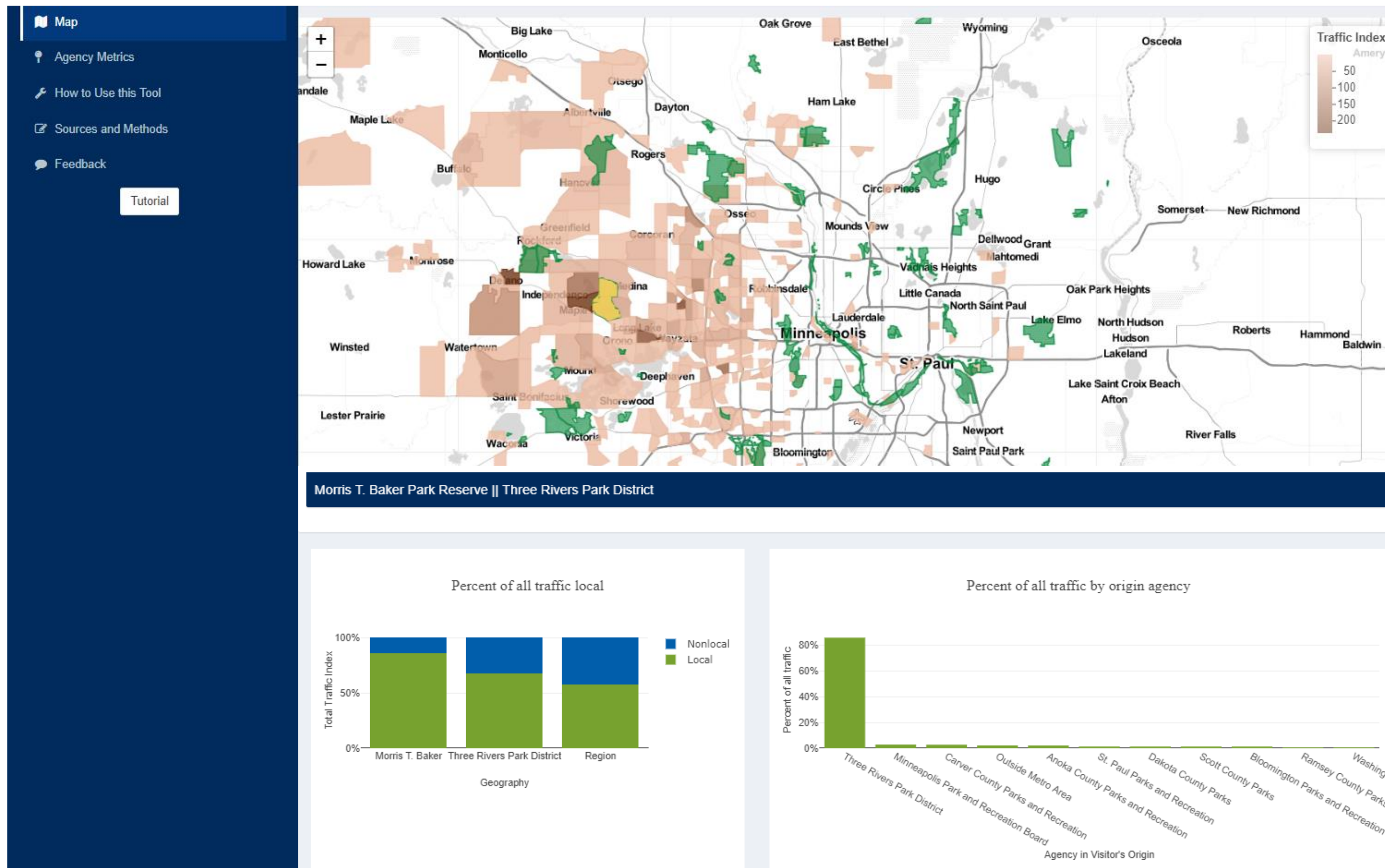
Lake Elmo Park Reserve
Washington County

A high-water mark for visits and system-size in 2017

An estimated 58.3 million visits were made to the Regional Parks System in 2017. Overall, 75.5% of visits were to regional parks, park reserves, and special recreation features, while the remaining visits were to regional trails. With over seven million visits, Minneapolis Chain of Lakes was the most-visited park in the Regional Parks System in 2017, accounting for 12% of all visits system-wide. There are 106 regional parks and trails in the region, but the top twenty most-visited regional parks and trails account for nearly two-thirds of all visits.²

One regional park and two regional trails were new to the 2017 estimate. Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board added Above the Falls Regional Park, Ramsey County added Lake Links Regional Trail, and Dakota County added Minnesota River Bluffs Regional Trail.³ These three additions to the Regional Parks System estimate totaled approximately 700,000 visits.

PlayFeatures: more than static reports





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